Gifts for Nixon To Pay His Taxes Will Be Returned

By Frances Lewine
Associated Press

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla., April 15—President Nixon is "heartened and moved" by gifts of $43,657 from more than 5,000 Americans, who want to help him pay his income tax bill of nearly a half million dollars, the White House said today.

The Florida White House announced an "outpouring of public support" relating to the President's personal income tax problems, but said Mr. Nixon will pay his own taxes and send back the gift money.

Mr. Nixon, who is here on an extended Easter holiday weekend stay, has been granted a 60-day extension to file his 1973 returns.

He got the extra time because of problems resulting from a decision by the Internal Revenue Service and the congressional Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation that he owes some $475,000 in income taxes and interest for the years 1969-1972.

In its tally made through last Saturday, the White House said Mr. Nixon had received 5,536 letters and telegrams with $43,657.13 in contributions.

The gifts ranged from six cents taped to a letter from a second grade school boy to $5,000 from an unidentified businessman. The average donation was listed as about $10.

There were 1,296 anonymous letters with contributions, mostly in small amounts that the White House said totaled $2,581.

President Nixon has asked that money from anonymous donors, which cannot be returned, be given to the American Red Cross to aid victims of the recent tornado disasters in 10 Midwestern and Southern states.

Of all the tax mail and messages, the White House said, there were only 113 "letters of criticism" — a ratio of 50 to 1 to bolster the President over his tax troubles.

"All of the mail was unsolicited," the announcement said.

Mr. Nixon has said he will pay the tax bill himself, however, and he may have to borrow money to do it.

"The President is deeply appreciative of the support, but feels he cannot accept the contributions," the White House said. Those gifts that can be returned will be sent back with a letter expressing the President's gratitude.

Aides said Mr. Nixon worked in his bayside study this morning reviewing some economic matters and talking by telephone to Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

The President also announced he plans to reappoint former Republican congresswoman Catherine May Bedell of Yakima, Wash., to another term on the U. S. Tariff Commission, where she has served as chairman since June, 1971.

Mr. Nixon is expected to return to Washington Tuesday. He plans to address the Daughters of the American Revolution in Constitution Hall Thursday morning.

A spokesman said the President will give a black-tie dinner at the White House Wednesday night for ministers of the Organization of American States but does not plan to attend the OAS meeting in Atlanta on Thursday.

The President also announced the appointment of four men to fill vacancies on the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, four reappointments to the commission and the reappointment of three members of the Advisory Council for Minority Enterprise.

The new commission appointees are John Hanson Briscoe of Hollywood, Md., speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates; Mayor John H. Poelker of St. Louis; John H. Brewer of Grandville, Mich., Kenty County commissioner, and Mayor Edwin Jacob Garn of Salt Lake City.

Reappointed to the commission were Robert E. Merriam of Chicago, Mayor Richard G. Lugar of Indianapolis, Mayor Jack D. Maltester of San Leandro, Calif., and Lawrence K. Roos, commissioner of St. Louis, County, Mo.

Reappointed to the minority enterprise panel were John A. Barr of Northbrook, Ill., Manuel A. Casiano Jr., of New York City, and Brady Keys of Los Angeles.